

# Researching the Ulster Prince Albert knives

Larry Vickery 12/2006

Robert Clemente of GA, first pointed out to me the fact that both Ulster and Schrade-Walden made a knife called Old Timer. Why would a company create 2 separate product lines and call them by the same name? It was one of the reasons I started collecting information about Ulster and of course Schrade and most of Schrade's other trade lines. During these last few years I have been collecting as much of the writings, printed material and pictures of all kinds related to Schrade as possible. My wife has been wondering if and when she would be able to see the rug in my office. Last year I started separating and scanning all the data in the hope of sharing all this material with other collectors like myself. I have started a web site and populated it with some of this material with a major hope of someday being able to donate it to the Knife Library we all hope comes to fruition.

While reading books, news articles and magazine articles written by other collectors and former employees of knife companies in my attempt to understand the spider web of companies and brand names I was always watchful for information about Ulster and why they too used the name Old Timer. I learned that very early in the life cycle of the Old Timer brand name Schrade Walden offered a 58OT under the Ulster name.

Back in 2002 I read an article written by Dennis Ellingsen of the Oregon Knife Club. He had researched and wrote a story about an advertisement program done by R. J. Reynolds's Tobacco Company on their Prince Albert pipe tobacco cans. The customer could collect 5 coupons from the internal liner and send them to Reynolds along with \$2.00 and become the proud owner of one of the 3 new "Ulster Old Timer" knives. I saved his article which was published in KnifeWorld and have had it posted on the cork board above my desk ever since. Earlier this year I came across an Ulster flyer for the 2 bladed 50OT that wasn't the same as the 50OT in Dennis' article. The search was on.

Most of the research materials available to Dennis were undated and by assembling the available clues and with help of Debbie Chase, then of Schrade, came pretty darn close to getting the names and timeframes correct. I have recently uncovered some material that will add some more facts and figures to his fine research and hopefully straighten out a couple of errors.

The Old Timer line started by Schrade-Walden in 1959 with a bone handled, Barlow styled knife, tang stamped, 2OT with OLD TIMER stamped across the bottom bolster. Early in 1960 the bone handled 8OT was added to the line. Later that year the ULSTER 58OT was made available followed in 1961 year by the ULSTER 50OT. In 1962 Schrade added the 108OT and ULSTER added both the 10OT and the 12OT. Both the 50OT and 12OT were only available for 1 or 2 years. The next change to the Old Timers line was in 1964 with the addition of the Schrade 15OT and 34OT. No other Ulster OT's were added, except for the special 114OT in 1968. By the late 60's Schrade had made the decision to close down the Ulster line and focus on the Schrade-Walden brand name.

In 1968 Reynolds' ordered 3 Ulster pattern knives from Schrade Walden specifying the Old Timer name brand. 2 of the knives were already being produced under the Ulster name the 3<sup>rd</sup> was a new OT pattern Camper/Utility knife using the existing Ulster 114 pattern. They were each given an internal company number, 4507 to the 114 OT-Reynolds, 4508 to the 10 OT-Reynolds and 4509 was assigned to the 58 OT-Reynolds. As with the other Old Timers the difference between the normal pattern and the OT was that the OT came with a brass liner where the standard pattern was steel.

The first year of production was for a modest number of 1200 of each pattern. By 1971 the orders had increased to 30,000 for the 114 OT, 46,000 for the 10 OT and a whopping 243,000 for the 58OT. The 58OT-Reynolds was not produced after 1972 although the standard 58OT was being shipped until 1980. The 114 OT stopped after 1973 and the last of the Reynolds order the 10 OT in 1974. The knives were delivered from Schrade Walden in bulk, packed in poly bags of 100 knives each.

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There have been many questions and stories about the knives in this offer over the years. I have heard that "These knives were just extra production from a failed European offer", "They never made that many". Rich Langston of NY relates a story that was told to him by Dave Swinden (former president of Schrade) during a recent museum display put on by Rich, that there were about 400,000 knives mailed during the ad campaign and that at one time 3 people were working full time just fulfilling these requests, most of the envelopes containing \$2.00 in cash. Dave went on to tell of, "Receiving one large envelope coming in requesting a knife when one of the girls opened it and stuck her hand in the envelope she let out a scream. It seems a southern fellow had put a muskrat pelt in as payment his note explained that he did not have the 2 dollars but that the muskrat pelt should cover it. By the way Schrade sent the knife."

The offer was to expire on October 31, 1973 but right up until Schrade closed its doors in 2004 they would do their best to honor the coupon. Again a story told by Rich and verified by Dave "If someone sent in the coupons and 2 dollars and Schrade being Schrade sent a letter of apology that the promotion had ended and that these knives were no longer available however they were sending the then made nearest version (then being made in lieu)."

R. J. Reynolds ran at least one other knife offer for which I've found very limited information. They offered an Ulster knife that looks to be the Ulster 58OT for Camel cigarettes. Again for \$2.00 and 2 "closure seals" from the pack a "Ulster Whittler" could be obtained. The offer on the Camel campaign expired in June 1973, a few months before the end of the Prince Albert offer. I will presume that the knives offered for this ad campaign were fulfilled from the same order of the 58OT-Reynolds. By my calculations, at the end of 1974 just over 500,000 Reynolds OT knives had been shipped.

Reynolds Tobacco USA sold its Prince Albert, Carter Hall, Apple and Royal Comfort smoking tobacco brands to John Middleton Inc. on April 2, 1987. A call to the new owners attempting to locate some information uncovered the fact that all the history on advertisements and products was lost. I was told it had been tossed into a dumpster during the move. Who needs to know about that stuff anyways?

Michael Little of TN has been on a research quest for the past few years and has shaken a few trees along the way. I have had the pleasure of being able to review and copy much of the material he has uncovered, which has added immensely to my virtual document library.

When I first learned that Schrade and Ulster were really one and the same company I kept pondering why the company would use the same trade name for two product lines. Of course the history of both Ulster and Schrade along with another half dozen companies is so intertwined that they resemble most family trees. To that end I still have no idea why Schrade did what they did with the Ulster Old Timers but they sure made and sold a lot of them.


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**ULSTER KNIFE COMPANY INC.**  
Manufacturers of Fine Pocket Cutlery Since 1876

Proudly presents the New  
**OLD-TIMER**

84 Years of Knife "Know-How" Built into ULSTER'S 3-Blade "Old Timer" Pocket Knife



No. 580 T  
**3-BLADE  
OLD-TIMER**

*A Collector's Item!*  
For those who want Old Fashioned quality built into a fine Pocket Knife, the Ulster 3-Blade Old Timer, No. 580 T is the perfect answer.  
A reproduction of Grand Dad's knife.

Precision made by American workmen in the good old American way, with Meerschaum Bone handles, a 3-1/2" Slim Premium Stock knife, with Turkish Clip, Spy and Pen blades of high carbon cutlery steel, electrolytically hardened and tempered for lasting toughness.  
All blades full mirror polished and hand edged to razor sharpness. Solid brass hand-milled linings and the attractive Old Timer shield. Nickel-silver bolsters.

PACKED 1/2 DOZ. PER CASED DISPLAY.  
Weight per Ass. - Approx. 1/2 LB.

TRADE MARK

PAGE U-580 T

**ULSTER KNIFE COMPANY INC.**  
Manufacturers of Fine Pocket Cutlery Since 1876

Proudly presents the New  
**OLD-TIMER**

84 Years of Knife "Know-How" Built into ULSTER'S 2-Blade "Old Timer" Pocket Knife



No. 500 T  
**2-BLADE  
OLD-TIMER**

*A Collector's Item!*  
For those who want Old Fashioned quality built into a fine Pocket Knife, the Ulster 2-Blade Old Timer, No. 500 T is the perfect answer.  
A reproduction of Grand Dad's knife.

Precision made by American workmen in the good old American way, with Meerschaum Bone handle, a 3-5/16" Serpentine Jackknife, with Turkish Clip and Pen blades of high carbon cutlery steel, electrolytically hardened and tempered for lasting toughness.  
All blades full mirror polished and hand edged to razor sharpness. Solid brass hand-milled linings and the attractive Old Timer shield. Nickel-silver bolsters.

PACKED 1/2 DOZ. PER CASED DISPLAY.  
Weight per Ass. - Approx. 1/2 LB.

TRADE MARK

PAGE U-500 T

**ULSTER KNIFE COMPANY INC.**  
Manufacturers of Fine Pocket Cutlery Since 1876

Proudly Presents  
**NEW! OLD-TIMER BARLOW KNIVES**



No. 10 OT      No. 12 OT

Illustrations are full size

The Classic Barlow Pattern is now offered in the highly-popular OLD-TIMER finish

FEATURING

- SOLID BRASS LININGS
- FINE GLAZED BLADES - HAND HONED TO CUT SHARP
- CHOICE OF TWO MOST POPULAR BLADINGS

**THE OLD-TIMER**  
"A KNIFE LIKE GRANDDAD'S"

ULSTER OLD-TIMER KNIVES ARE PACKED EITHER ONE HALF DOZEN TO AN EASED DISPLAY PRICE, THREE OF ONE OR INDIVIDUALLY GIFT WRAPPED ONE DOZEN TO A NEAT, SWEETY CHOICE WHEN ORDERING.

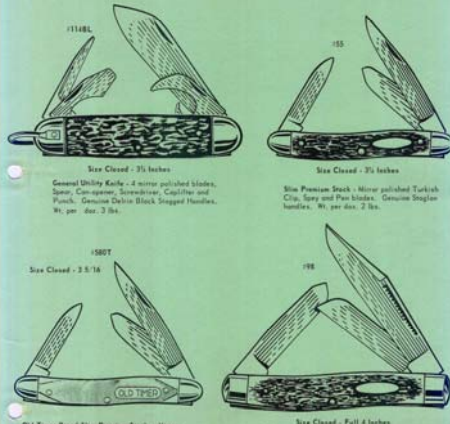
MANUFACTURERS OF QUALITY CUTLERY SINCE 1876

Weight per dozen - Approx. 2 lbs.

PAGE U1012 OT

**ULSTER KNIFE COMPANY, INC.**  
Manufacturers of Fine Pocket Cutlery Since 1876

ULSTER pocket knives feature special alloy high carbon cutlery steel blades that are electrolytically hardened and tempered, mirror polished and hand edged for maximum sharpness and edge holding ability. Many patterns have exclusive STAGGON® unbreakable handles with nickel silver bolsters and decorative shields. Unique OLD-TIMER knives have Meerschaum Bone handles. Pattern number is stamped on the outer blade of each knife for ready identification. All knives have solid brass linings.



1108L      155

Size Closed - 3 1/2 inches

General Utility Knife - 4 mirror polished blades, Sanyo, Can opener, Screwdriver, Nailfile and Punch. Genuine Dablin Black Stopped Handles. Wt. per Ass. 3 lbs.

Size Closed - 3 1/2 inches

Slim Premium Stock - Mirror polished Turkish Clip, Spy and Pen blades. Genuine Staglon handles. Wt. per Ass. 2 lbs.

1580T      798

Size Closed - 3 3/4 inches

Old Timer Broad Slim Premium Stock - Mirror polished Turkish Clip, Spy and Pen Blades. Genuine Bone or Staglon handles. Wt. per Ass. 2 lbs.

Size Closed - Full 4 inches

Full Size Premium Stock Knife - Features mirror polished Clip, Screwdriver and Spy Blades. Genuine Staglon handles. Wt. per Ass. 3 lbs.

TRADE MARK

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Underneath the matches it reads:  
 Allow 6 weeks for delivery. Offer expires June 30, 1973. Offer is limited to U.S.A. and is not valid where prohibited by law

Sources:

- Robert Clemente: [clemente@charter.net](mailto:clemente@charter.net)
- Dennis Ellingsen: [ibdennis@comcast.net](mailto:ibdennis@comcast.net)
- Dennis's original article is available at his web site : <http://www.oregonknifeclub.com/Newsletter%200203.pdf>
- Richard Langston: [lt632ret@frontiernet.net](mailto:lt632ret@frontiernet.net)
- Michael Little: [mllittle@tds.net](mailto:mllittle@tds.net)
- KNIFE WORLD MAGAZINE: [WWW.KNIFEWORLD.COM](http://WWW.KNIFEWORLD.COM)

All pictures except the Camel matches are from my personal collection.  
 The Camel matches are from Chris Mitchell: [chris@258marketing.com](mailto:chris@258marketing.com)  
[www.bladeforums.com](http://www.bladeforums.com)  
[www.aapk.com](http://www.aapk.com)  
[www.collectors-of-schrades-r.us](http://www.collectors-of-schrades-r.us)